

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Pedestrian fatalities represent nearly 17 percent of total traffic fatalities in California, significantly exceeding the national average of 11 percent. During the last 10 years, California has averaged approximately 730 pedestrian fatalities per year. Pedestrian safety has been a significant challenge to many California cities/communities, and therefore improved pedestrian safety has been among top priorities for these cities. In California during 2007, fatal and injury collisions involving a pedestrian accounted for 7.2 percent of the State's fatal and injury collisions. Too often, the victims are children and senior citizens. Targeting those "at-risk" populations has been a challenge and many communities have introduced an array of innovative programs to combat the continuing disparity in the number of pedestrian victims that are children, senior citizens and/or culturally challenged.

Progressive jurisdictions are taking aim at state of the art equipment that would slow the speed of traffic on residential streets, reduce traffic injuries and fatalities and improve the quality of life for everyone involved.

Pedestrian Safety Assessments (PSA) are another approach to improving pedestrian safety within California communities, as it enables cities to systematically identify pedestrian safety issues/problems and effective remedial options. Improved pedestrian safety and improved pedestrian infrastructure in turn can lead to enhanced walkability and economic vitality of communities. With funding from the California Office of Traffic Safety, the Institute of Transportation Studies Technology Transfer Program (Tech Transfer), University of California Berkeley, will be offering Pedestrian Safety Assessments (PSA) as a free statewide service to California cities/communities starting in 2008. A technical guide is also being developed detailing how to conduct California PSA's. The objective of the California PSA is to enable California communities to:

- Improve pedestrian safety at specific locations and citywide
- Create safe, comfortable, accessible, and welcoming environments for pedestrians
- Enhance walkability, liveability, and economic vitality

According to the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) 2007 provisional data, a total of 13,608 pedestrians were injured and 670 were killed.

- Pedestrians represent 16.8 percent of all fatalities and 5.1 percent of all injuries.
- 17 percent of all pedestrian victims were between the ages of 5-14.
- 14.2 percent of all pedestrian victims were 60 years of age or older.
- 13 percent of all pedestrian victims were between the ages of 45-54.
- The need to continue the efforts to address pedestrian safety among populations for which English is not their first language is alarming. In some communities, almost 100 percent of the pedestrian victims are non-English speakers. The last census

showed a dramatic change in demographics in the last ten years, resulting in an increase in pedestrian population unfamiliar with the rules of the road, signage, and traffic management systems.

- School zones have been identified as danger zones for aggressive driving habits and behaviors. Communities have taken ownership of these areas by partnering with law enforcement, school officials, community based organizations, advocacy groups, parent-teacher associations, engineers and others to increase safety around local schools and decrease the alarming number of children who are killed or injured on their way to and from school.
- Technology geared toward increased pedestrian safety warrants implementation and evaluation. The efficiency of these devices is identified in some of the funded programs. The strategy toward pedestrian safety includes active school zone signs and in-pavement lighted crosswalks.

BICYCLE SAFETY

Following the rules of the roads while riding a bicycle may increase the chances of avoiding traffic collisions with vehicles. Bicycle or safety helmets have been shown to significantly reduce the risk of head and brain injury. In fact, it is estimated that as many as seven out of every eight bicycle related fatalities among children could have been prevented with a bicycle helmet.

In 2007:

- Bicyclists represented 3.1 percent of all fatalities and 3.9 percent of all injuries.
- 19.4 percent of bicyclists killed and injured were under age 15.
- Adults continued to represent a significant segment of the population “at-risk” for injury in a collision. Environmental issues, health concerns and increased traffic congestion have driven many communities and individuals to emphasize alternative means of commuting. Programs originated by employers, environmental groups, the healthcare community, and others encourage cycling among adults. As a result, it is not uncommon to find more adults riding bicycles.

II. ACTION PLANS

Motor vehicle traffic poses a serious threat to children in neighborhoods, or near schools and parks. In order to achieve a safe environment for bicyclists and pedestrians, efforts need to be made toward the following goals:

- Slowing vehicle speeds.
- Reducing pedestrian risks at street crossing locations.
- Improve awareness of and visibility between motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclist.
- Improve pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist behaviors.
- Traffic laws to be complied with by all users.

By changing and improving behaviors, injuries and fatalities resulting from vehicle crashes would decline significantly, raising the level of quality of life, especially in residential areas. Parents have the need to feel at ease with the notion of their children playing outside, walking to and from school and enjoying their neighborhood.

III. TASKS

TASK 1 - PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

This task provides for the necessary staff time and expenses incurred by OTS that are directly related to the planning, development, coordination, monitoring, auditing, and evaluation of grants within this program area, and the preparation of the 2009 Highway Safety Plan. This task also includes assistance to staff to attend and participate in technology transfer workshops, training sessions, educational meetings, seminars and conferences.

TASK 2 - PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY PROGRAMS

This task provides funds for grants that target bicycle and pedestrian safety through the school system and local communities. Activities to be conducted for these grants include traffic safety rodeos at schools and community events; traffic safety workshops tailored for targeted audience; helmet distribution programs; bicycle and pedestrian diversion alternatives for cited youth; and increased enforcement around schools. The main goals of these grants are to decrease the number of fatal and injured victims resulting from traffic collisions with bicyclists and/or pedestrians, and to increase public awareness of traffic safety practices for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

Grant #	Fund	Agency	FFY 2009 Funds
PS0705	402	San Francisco	\$112,343
PS0802	402	Clovis	\$81,523
PS0804	402	Berkeley	\$424,305
PS0805	402	Santa Rosa	\$142,666
PS0807	402	Santa Cruz County	\$207,814

TASK 3 - PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY PROGRAMS FOR POPULATIONS AT RISK

These bicycle and pedestrian safety programs will target populations identified to be at most risk in local communities, including senior drivers and multicultural communities. Activities for these grants include traffic safety rodeos, assemblies, workshops, multilingual public information and awareness efforts, incentives/promotional items, distribution of safety helmets, and selective enforcement.

Grant #	Fund	Agency	FFY 2009 Funds
PS0803	402	UC, San Diego	\$174,847
PS0806	402	Los Angeles County	\$189,935
PS0903	402	California Highway Patrol	\$204,939

TASK 4 - COMPREHENSIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAMS

These programs exercise multiple approaches in addressing more than one traffic safety need. These include media activity, traffic safety rodeos, educational presentations, and enforcement geared to focus on more than one traffic safety area.

Grant #	Fund	Agency	FFY 2009 Funds
PS0901	402	Oakland	\$122,147

TASK 5 - STATEWIDE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY PROGRAMS

These programs target the enhancement of bicycle and pedestrian safety throughout the State. These grants can develop teams of transportation professionals to identify pedestrian problems and solutions to improve pedestrian environments. In addition, the California Department of Public Health and Caltrans will work with the California Pedestrian Advisory Committee (CalPED) and the Challenge Area 8 Team (Making and Street Crossing Safer) to develop a coordinated approach to safety planning, assessment, and educational efforts across the state.

Grant #	Fund	Agency	FFY 2009 Funds
PS0801	402	CHP	\$392,805
PS0904	402	University of California Berkeley	\$179,618
PS0905	402	California Department of Public Health	\$148,087

TASK 6 - EQUIPMENT PROGRAMS

Programs under this task will provide equipment with the overall goal of reducing the number of fatal and injury collisions involving pedestrians in their jurisdictions. Equipment can include lighted crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signs, flashing beacons, and radar display signs. Equipment funded in this task is for use “off” the federal aid system.

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Grant #	Fund	Agency	FFY 2009 Funds
PS0902	402	Pleasant Hill	\$35,000